

## **House Transit Commission**

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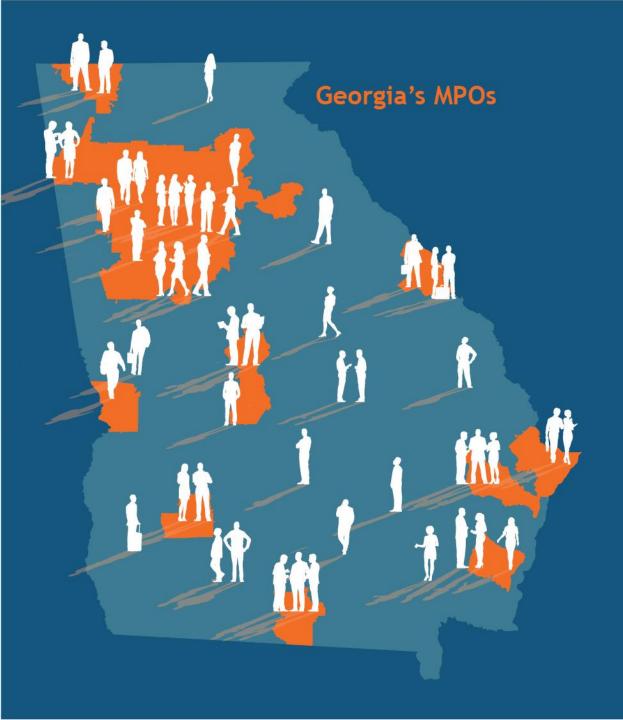
Georgia Association of MPOs

June 29, 2017



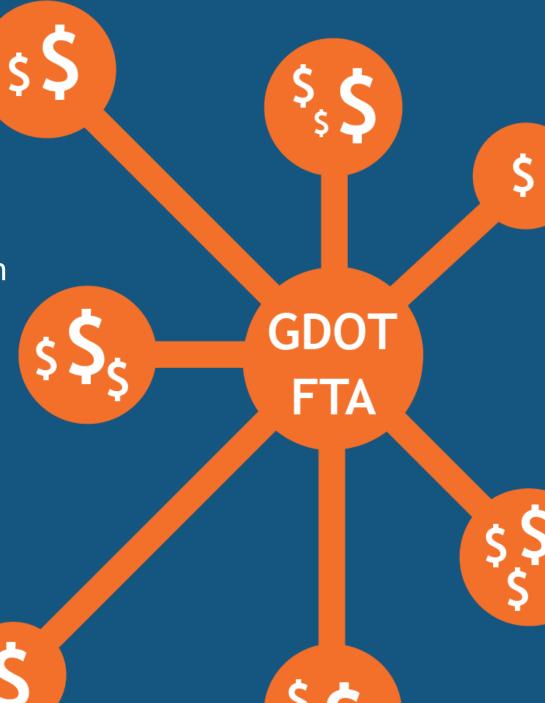
Transit is provided in more than 125 counties in Georgia for a variety of people and for many different purposes.

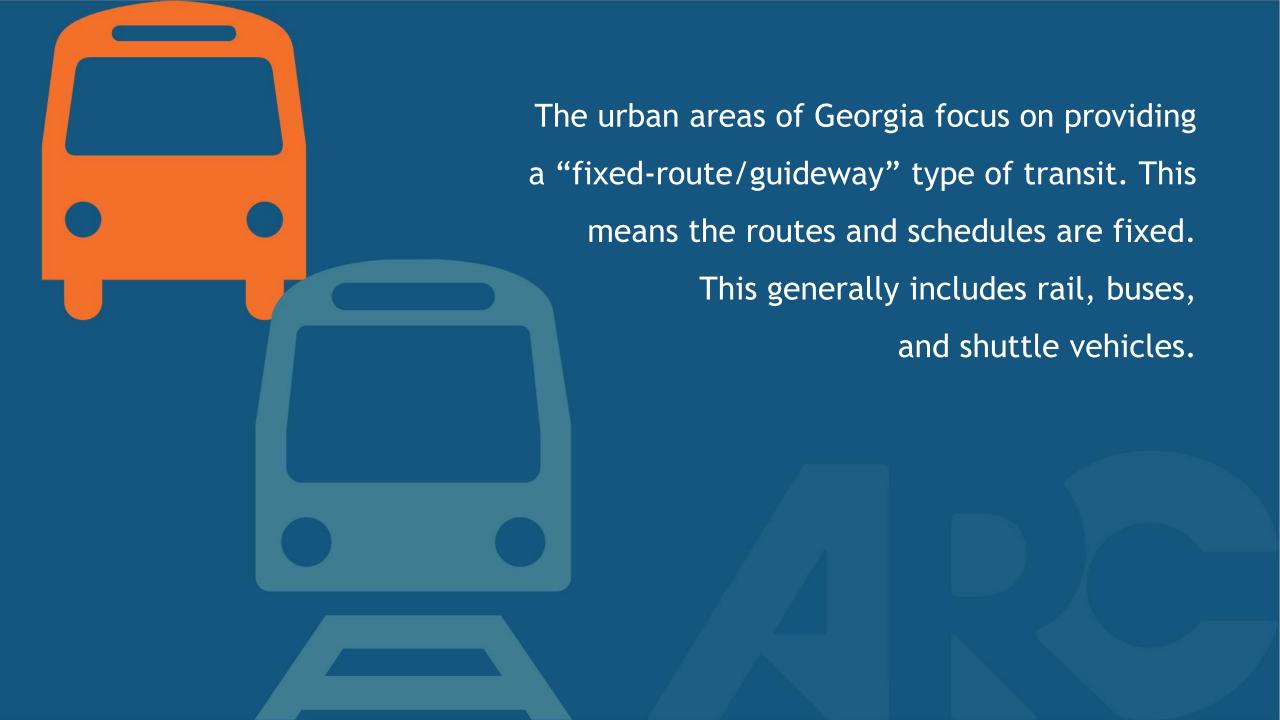




An area is designated as "urban" by meeting certain population density amounts. The same is true for "rural" areas.

The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) oversees federal funding distributions statewide, but its oversight in urban areas is shared with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the designated recipients (some transit agencies). In rural areas, GDOT provides the majority of oversight.





The rural areas of Georgia focus on providing a "demand-response" type of transit. Routes and schedules are not fixed. Riders must schedule the trip in advance, on vehicles that include buses, minibuses, and even large vans.



Both rural and urban transit are required to be Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible. Urban areas are required to provide ADA paratransit service along fixed routes (3/4 of a mile to either side of each fixed route). Urban area paratransit is similar to rural transit service for the general population.



Generally, older adults and veterans each have a higher likelihood of having disabilities than the general population.

These populations tend to use the same services as those with disabilities.



Transportation for individuals with disabilities or lower income, older adults, and veterans is often referred to as "human services transportation" (HST) because these populations often have unique access and/or financial needs.

Individuals taking these trips often have "trip purpose" requirements mandated by federal law. The most common trip purpose is medical, but could also include education, employment, errands, etc.





Certain federal funding programs for human services transportation (HST) flow through two state agencies: Department of Community Health (DCH) and the Department of Human Services (DHS). Each has its own transportation mandates.

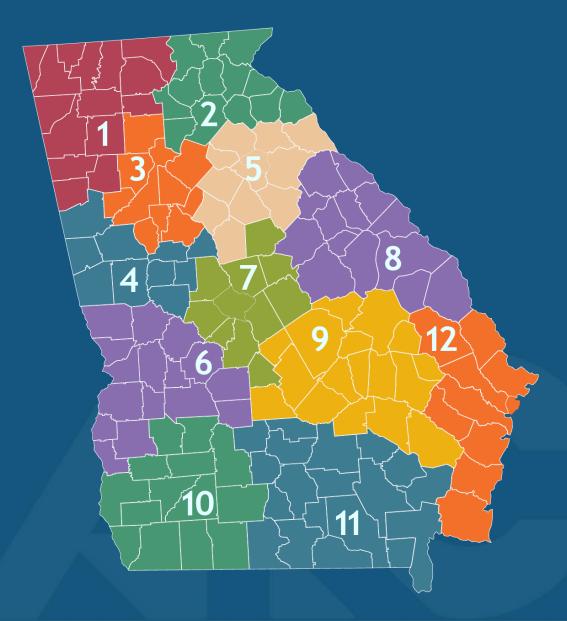
DHS serves a diverse group of HST populations with a variety of eligible trip purposes, with programs for individuals in three categories:

- \* individuals with disabilities
- \* individuals with low income
- \* older adults

DCH oversees transportation for Medicaid (lower income individuals) and Medicare (older adults). This includes transportation to medical appointments. The Medicaid program receives the most funds of any HST program in the state. These trips are referred to as "non-emergency medical" trips to distinguish them from ambulance trips.



## **DHS Service Areas**



### **DCH Service Areas**



As indicated in the previous maps, DHS transportation service areas correlate exactly to Regional Commission boundaries, which include MPOs. This makes transit trips for HST populations on the DHS system or a regular transit provider more efficient.

In contrast, DCH service areas do not align with boundaries for DHS, MPOs, or Regional Commissions. This makes coordination of service across agencies less feasible, which is less efficient and user-friendly.

In summary, urban areas have fixed routes for the general population and demand-response for HST populations (paratransit). There are no fixed routes in rural areas. All service is demand-response.



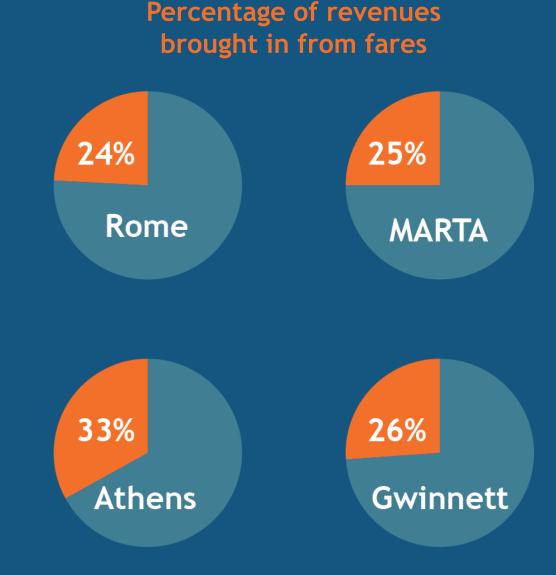
## **Transit Funding**



Funding for Georgia's transit agencies is comprised of four main categories:

- 1. Revenues from fare collection
- 2. Local funds generated through sales tax, property tax and other fees
- 3. Federal appropriations and grants
- 4. State funds

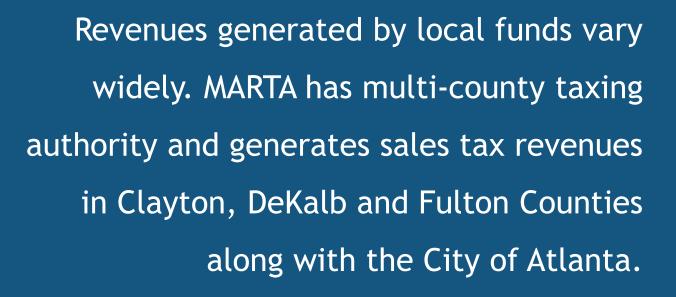
A healthy transit system brings in a significant portion of its revenues through fare collections, and in Georgia it is common to see at least 25% of total revenues generated through ridership.

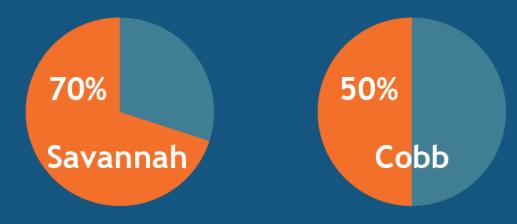


Source: 2015 NTD Transit Agency Profiles

## Percentage of revenues brought in from local funds







Savannah and Chatham County have a special taxing district to fund Chatham Area Transit.

Source: 2015 NTD Transit Agency Profiles



MARTA and Savannah are the exception to the rule; the majority of transit systems in Georgia do not have unique taxing abilities. For example, Gwinnett Transit, Athens-Clarke and CobbLinc are comparable to most other transit providers around the state.

**Gwinnett County Transit** 

All but MARTA and Savannah receive general funds from their respective governments, raised from local property taxes, sales taxes, and other fees. In general, these taxes and fees compete with other budget priorities.



While the state financially supports GRTA/SRTA's Xpress Bus service with annual appropriations, it does not provide annual financial support to any other local or regional transit provider. In 2015, the General Assembly approved a one-time

allocation of \$75 million in bonds for transit capital needs around the state (GO! Transit Capital Program).





MARTA remains the largest heavy rail transit system in the country that does not receive state financial support. Georgia is the largest state (by population) that offers no dedicated funding for transit.

marta

#### Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding categories include:

FTA 5307

FTA 5339

FTA 5310

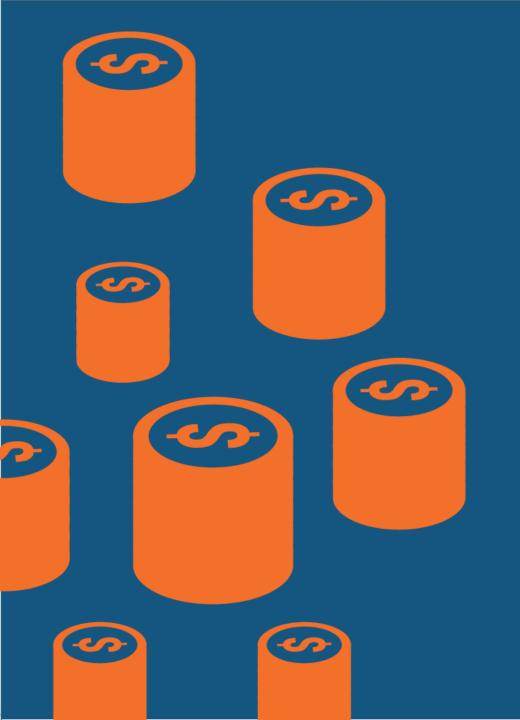
New Starts, Core Capacity, and

FTA 5311

Small Starts (NS/CC/SS)\*

(\*Operating funds for 20 years enable eligibility for NS/CC/SS.)





Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funding categories include:

- Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality (CMAQ)
- Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)
- Surface Transportation Program (STP)

# Health and Human Services (HHS) funding categories include:

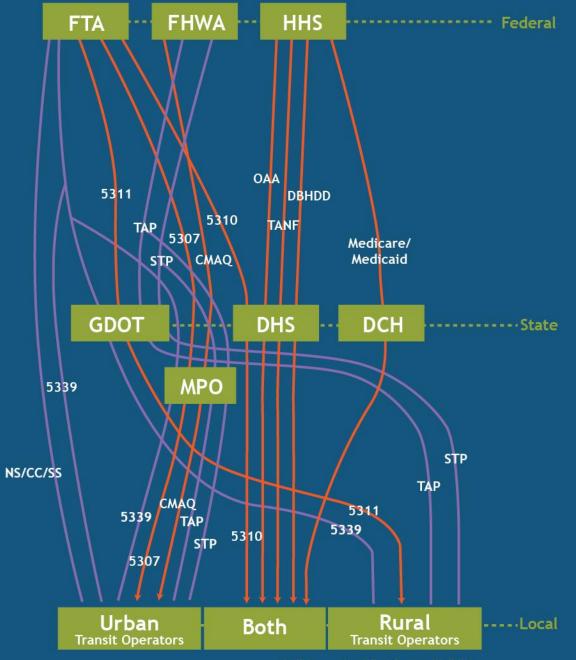
- Title III/Older Americans Act (OAA)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Vocational Rehab (GVRA)
- Medicare and Medicaid



## Funding Sources and Flow

Capital expenses only

Capital + operating expenses



\* All items simplified for intelligibility.

In summary, these various systems have differences including:

- Service types fixed route or demand response
- Schedule types fixed or dynamic day-to-day
- Vehicle types trains, buses, mini-buses, shuttles, large vans
- Personal eligibility no restrictions or service only for certain populations
- Trip eligibility no restrictions or service only for certain trip purposes
- Administration multiple counties are crafted into more manageable service areas, but these are different across agencies
- Funding diverse funding types and uses funneled through different agencies and geographies

#### **CHALLENGES**

\* Economic activity and social services rarely stop at county lines, but transit works as if these critical activities stay inside counties.

\* No system exists to coordinate statewide transit (rural, urban, DCH, DHS) - DCH vehicles can drive past DHS vehicles and rural county transit vehicles on their way to the same destinations, and all may be using their own routing/scheduling software (Route Match, Trapeze, Trip\$, etc.) without "talking" to each other.

In 2010, the General Assembly established within the Governor's Development Council (under GRTA) a committee to review rural and human services transit coordination across the state. Annual recommendations were issued, without action. The General Assembly eliminated the committee, and there is currently no agency responsible for transit coordination and data collection.

#### What is Georgia's vision for transit?

**Permanent Funding Source** 

**Governance Structure** 

**Service Coordination** 

**Local Decision-making**